

The Boy and the Little Lamb



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Oliver stepped off the bus and breathed in the smell of hay and sunshine. His grandparents' farm spread out before him like a picture book. Grandma Ruth waved from the porch, her green apron flapping. Grandpa Walter tipped his flat cap and smiled. 'Ready for a summer of chores?' he asked. Oliver nodded, his red boots sinking into the soft dirt.



Grandma Ruth showed Oliver around the farm. 'Every morning, we feed the animals first,' she said. 'Then we check on the little lamb.' Oliver's eyes widened when he saw the lamb. It was small and fluffy, with a red ribbon collar and a tiny brass bell. 'It's so little!' Oliver whispered. The lamb blinked its dark eyes and hid behind its mother.



The next morning, Oliver woke up early. He pulled on his blue overalls and red boots. Grandpa Walter handed him a bucket of feed. 'Chores first, then play,' he said. Oliver fed the chickens and the goats. Then he went to the lamb's pen. The lamb was shy and stayed close to its mother. Oliver sat quietly and waited.



Oliver visited the lamb every morning. He brought fresh hay and clean water. 'Hello, little lamb,' he said softly. The lamb just bleated and backed away. Grandma Ruth watched from the fence. 'Sheep talk with soft bleats and small movements,' she said. 'Watch her ears and tail.' Oliver nodded and watched closely.



Each day, Oliver noticed something new. When the lamb was nervous, its ears flattened. When it was curious, its ears perked up. Oliver learned to move slowly and speak softly. 'You're safe,' he whispered. The lamb took a tiny step forward. Oliver's heart did a happy skip. He didn't rush. He just sat and waited.



One morning, a cold wind blew across the farm. The lamb shivered in the corner of the pen. Oliver brought an old blanket and draped it over the fence. 'This will keep you warm,' he said. The lamb sniffed the blanket and bleated softly. Oliver smiled. 'I'll be back tomorrow,' he promised.



Grandpa Walter taught Oliver how to fill the water trough. 'Animals need fresh water every day,' he said. Oliver lugged the heavy bucket, spilling a little on his boots. The lamb watched him with curious eyes. When Oliver finished, the lamb took a step toward him. Oliver held his breath. 'Hello,' he whispered. The lamb bleated and stepped back.



Days turned into weeks. Oliver kept his routine: feed the animals, check the water, visit the lamb. Sometimes the lamb ignored him. Sometimes it hid. But Oliver always came back. 'Why do you keep trying?' Grandma Ruth asked. 'Because she needs me,' Oliver said. 'And I promised.' Grandma Ruth smiled and hugged him.



One rainy day, Oliver couldn't go outside. He watched the lamb from the window. The lamb stood in the drizzle, looking toward the house. Oliver waved. The lamb bleated. 'I'll come as soon as I can,' Oliver called. Grandma Ruth brought cocoa. 'Patience is a farm chore too,' she said. Oliver nodded and watched the rain.



The next morning, the sun returned. Oliver ran to the pen. The lamb saw him and trotted over. It sniffed his boot and bleated. Oliver giggled. 'You remember me!' he said. The lamb nuzzled his hand. Its bell jingled. Oliver felt warm inside. He had been patient, and now the lamb trusted him.



Oliver decided to teach the lamb a trick. He held out a piece of apple. 'Come here, little lamb,' he called. The lamb tilted its head. It took a step. Then another. Finally, it nibbled the apple from his hand. 'You did it!' Oliver cheered. The lamb bleated and wagged its tail. It was the happiest sound Oliver had ever heard.



From that day, the lamb followed Oliver everywhere. It trotted behind him as he fed the chickens. It waited by the fence as he filled the trough. Grandpa Walter chuckled. 'You've made a friend for life,' he said. Oliver beamed. 'She's my best friend,' he said. The lamb bleated in agreement.



Summer began to fade. The leaves turned gold. Oliver knew he would have to go home soon. He sat in the pen with the lamb. 'I'll miss you,' he whispered. The lamb rested its head on his knee. Grandma Ruth found them there. 'You've done a good job, Oliver,' she said. 'You showed up every day.' Oliver nodded and hugged the lamb.



On the last day, Oliver fed the animals one final time. He filled the water trough and cleaned the pen. Then he knelt beside the lamb. 'I'll come back next summer,' he promised. The lamb bleated and licked his hand. Oliver laughed. 'I'll bring you an apple,' he said. The lamb's bell jingled as it wagged its tail.



As the bus pulled away, Oliver waved from the window. The lamb stood by the fence, watching him go. Grandma Ruth waved her apron. Grandpa Walter tipped his cap. Oliver felt a warm glow. He had learned that animals trust those who show up every day. And he knew he would keep his promise.



Back home, Oliver thought about the lamb every day. He drew pictures of it and told his friends about the farm. He saved apple cores for his next visit. 'Caring for animals takes patience,' he told his mom. 'And you have to keep your routine.' His mom smiled. 'You've grown this summer,' she said. Oliver nodded. He couldn't wait for next summer.